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TWO HELLENISTIC SILVER CUPS.
Collection of Mr. J. P. Morgan, New York.

ART IN AMERICA · AN ILLUSTRATED MAGAZINE · VOLUME VI NUMBER IV · JUNE MCMXVIII

TWO SILVER CUPS IN MR. J. P. MORGAN'S COLLECTION · BY GISELA M. A. RICHTER

THE arts and the crafts of ancient Greece were closely akin. The craftsmen drew upon the same general subject matter as the sculptors and painters, and we find in their ranks men of great artistic genius. Hence our knowledge of Greek art is happily not dependent only on the comparatively few remnants of Greek sculpture or on the isolated scraps of Greek painting which have survived. The Greek potters, vase painters, bronze workers, gem cutters, and other craftsmen have left a rich heritage for our refreshment and inspiration.

Among these craftsmen the goldsmiths and silversmiths occupied a conspicuous place. Unfortunately, the materials which they worked were precious in themselves, so that few of their products have escaped the melting pot. Some happy chances, however, have preserved for us a few of their works, and from these we can form an estimate of our loss. The most famous discoveries have been the "treasures" found at Boscoreale,¹ Bernay (near Velliret in Normandy),² Hildesheim,³ and Pompeii,⁴ now in the possession of the Louvre, the Cabinet des Médailles, the Berlin, and the Naples Museums, respectively. The Crimea has yielded some important pieces,⁵ and several early bowls have been found in Cyprus and in Italy; the latter, however, show such strong Oriental influence in the decoration that they can hardly be grouped with purely classical material.⁶ Little else has been unearthed of the same quality and interest; though

¹ Cf. A. Héron de Villefosse, *Le Trésor de Boscoreale*, *Monuments Piot*, V, 1899.

² Cf. E. Babelon, *Le Cabinet des antiques à la Bibliothèque Nationale*, pls. XIV, XVII, XXIV, XXXVIII, XLI, LI.

³ Cf. E. Pernice and F. Winter, *Der Hildesheimer Silberfund*, Berlin, 1901.

⁴ Cf. Th. Schreiber, *Die alexandrinische Toreutik*, p. 339, Nos. 61 ff., and references there cited.

⁵ S. Reinach, *Antiquités du Bosphore cimmérien*, pls. XXXIII ff.; L. Stephani, *Compte-Rendu de la commission impériale archéologique*, 1864, pls. 1 ff.

⁶ Some of these bowls of mixed Oriental style are included in the Cesnola Collection; cf. J. L. Myres, *Cesnola Handbook*, Nos. 4551 ff.

plain silver dishes have turned up occasionally in various places. In these circumstances every new addition to our limited stock acquires great importance—both intrinsically and for the light that may thereby be shed on the many unsolved problems of ancient toreutics.

Mr. J. P. Morgan is the possessor of two silver cups, of unknown provenance, second to none in beauty of workmanship and preservation. Through his generosity they are at present exhibited in the Metropolitan Museum of Art (Classical Wing, Seventh Room). Their importance makes it desirable that they should be more generally known; and I am indebted to Mr. Morgan for permission to publish them here.

The cups, which clearly form a pair [H., $4\frac{3}{16}$ in. (10.6 cm.); D. of mouth, $3\frac{3}{16}$ in. (9 cm.)], are of a deep bowl shape with slender foot, and are decorated with reliefs in repoussé work, with engraved details. The embossed figures were gilt, but this gilding has partly disappeared. Each cup has an inside silver lining, to which the rim is attached; the moulded foot was cast separately and soldered to the bowl. Originally each cup had two handles, but these have disappeared; the places where they were attached are still visible. The subject of the decorations is taken from bird life. Long-legged cranes are hunting for food in a wheat field.¹ Some have found their prey and are seen eating fish and water snakes amid ears of wheat, sorghum and poppies; others are still looking for their share, or are nibbling at the grain;² and still others have had enough for the time and are quietly enjoying a rest. Here and there grasshoppers or bees are seen crawling and resting along the ears and flowers. We could not have a more charming and lifelike scene. The whole setting, the various attitudes of the birds, the insects, and flowers are all so natural that we feel that the scene must have been copied directly from life. It is Greek naturalism at its height. Nobody would mistake it, however, for Japanese, though we inevitably think of Japanese parallels. For in spite of its obvious naturalism,

¹ I wish here to acknowledge my thanks to Major Bashford Dean of the Metropolitan Museum and to Mr. J. K. Small of the Bronx Botanical Gardens for their help in identifying the various animals and plants represented on the cups.

² The scenes could almost serve as illustrations to the description of the life of cranes given in Brehms Tierleben, 1891, vol. V, p. 674. "Large swamps and morasses form their homes; those which border cultivated land appear to be preferred, because they hunt for food as much in the swamps as in the fields. . . . Though all cranes sometimes eat insects and worms, a small amphibious animal, or a little fish, and even plunder a bird's nest occasionally, they seem to regard animal food only as a delicacy. Grain of different kinds, as well as buds, leaves, roots, or bulbs form their principal nourishment."

there is a feeling of symmetry, of order, of conscious spacing, so characteristic of all Greek work. Thus, on each cup are two sets of two birds, placed facing each other, with a plant between them—the old heraldic grouping translated into nature; or nature translated into symmetrical grouping.

In the Boscoreale treasure, purchased by Baron Edmond de Rothschild and given by him to the Louvre Museum, is a pair of silver cups also decorated with cranes,¹ which bear an unmistakable resemblance to the Morgan cups. The shape, the dimensions, the composition, and the workmanship are in fact so similar that it is likely that the two sets were produced in the same workshop, if not by the same workman. To determine, therefore, the date and school to which the Morgan cups belong, it is important to remember the history of the Boscoreale treasure. The villa at Boscoreale in which the treasure was found was buried in the year 79 A.D., by the same eruption of Mount Vesuvius which proved disastrous to Pompeii. The owner of the villa had evidently been a collector of silverware and other valuables, and when the catastrophe came, he himself or his servant had tried to carry these away to safety, but was overcome in the act. A skeleton of a man was found head downward, holding in his hands bracelets and a gold chain; round about lay over a thousand gold coins (dating from the time of Augustus to Vespasian); and in an adjoining niche was the silver treasure, consisting of almost one hundred vases and utensils, the whole once wrapped in a cloth.

Pliny, Martial, and other Roman writers frequently refer to the passion of Roman collectors for silverware. There were in Rome special halls where such silver was sold (*basilicae argentariae* or *vasculariae*). Collectors, we are told, would stroll about these halls, hunting for valuable pieces. Sometimes special auctions were held, and we can imagine that there was as much excitement at the Roman *atria auctionaria* as there is today at an important sale in this country. Signatures of famous artists greatly added to the value of the pieces, and doubtless such signatures were sometimes forged by dealers to enhance the value of their wares. We may form an estimate of the prices sometimes paid by keen collectors from Pliny's statement (Nat. Hist., XXXIII, 156) that a pair of cups by Zopyros was valued at 1,200,000 sesterces (about \$52,500), and that Crassus paid 1,000,000 sesterces for two cups by Mentor. Especially desirable,

¹ Cf. A. Héron de Villefosse, *op. cit.*, pls. XI, XII.

Martial tells us, was old silver, even if it was so worn that the reliefs could hardly be recognized. Juvenal (I, 76) includes old chased silver (*vetus argentum et stantem extra copula caprum*) among the regular appurtenances of a rich household. Horace and Martial satirize in an amusing way the discussions of collectors on their silverware and quote very much the same kind of talk that we hear nowadays by connoisseurs or would-be connoisseurs. Incidentally we learn that such silver vases usually came in pairs. An important statement is made by Pliny. After giving a list of the most famous Greek chasers of silver down to the latter part of the first century B.C., and describing some of their works, he says: "The whole art then suddenly disappeared so completely that nowadays we only value wrought silver for its age, and reckon its merit established when the chasing is so worn that the very design can no longer be made out" (Nat. Hist., XXIII, 157; Miss K. Jex-Blake's translation).

We must not take Pliny's statement too literally. It was probably with silver as it was with sculpture and other branches of art in imperial Rome. The Romans ruthlessly plundered Greece and the East for their art treasures, and among such spoils wrought silver played an important part (Pliny, Nat. Hist., XXXIII, 139 ff.). Where such genuine Greek works were obtainable, they were prized above all else; but the supply being limited, copies were freely made from older models. Today, also, we assiduously collect old furniture, old silver, old china, and "reckon their merit established" when they are properly worn and worm-eaten; but we also often have to be content with reproductions of old designs.

The character of the Boscoreale treasure fully bears out this estimate. It was obviously a mixed collection and derived from many sources. Some of the vases are clearly Roman work, both on account of their style and because they bear the signatures of Roman artists. Others (and among them the cups with cranes so like the Morgan examples) show a delicacy and vitality of workmanship which are essentially Greek. In other words, they have the quality which has enabled us in every branch of art to distinguish original Greek work from Roman reproduction. Another important point is that a number of the Boscoreale vases show decided signs of wear (among them again the crane cups), and therefore must have long antedated the time of their sudden burial.

If we assume, then, on the evidence at our disposal, that part of the Boscoreale treasure is of late Greek rather than Roman origin (dating it in the third to first century B.C.), and class with it other products of the same high quality, such as the cups here under discussion, the question arises: where was the original home of this Hellenistic silverware? This question has been the subject of much discussion and conjecture. The general belief at present is that it may have been Alexandria.¹ There is some slight evidence derived from the Boscoreale treasure which points in that direction. One of the plates is decorated with a symbolic representation of the city of Alexandria, a clear reference to an Eastern source. The famous skeleton cups likewise betray the taste of the great Egyptian center of culture, in the choice of philosophers' and poets' names with which they are inscribed. The two cups showing storks with their young point to Egypt or Asia Minor for their origin; for in Italy or Greece the artist could not have observed them in nesting time; and the pictures are clearly copied from nature. However, in Egypt itself little Hellenistic silverware has actually been found, though isolated discoveries of importance have been made.² Had Egypt, and Alexandria in particular, been the great center of manufacture, we might well expect the much-excavated soil of that country to have yielded more material. On the other hand, knowing as we do the wholesale way with which the East was plundered by the Romans, the great popularity which silverware enjoyed with them, and the portable as well as perishable quality of such material, it is not impossible that the conquerors made so clean a sweep as to leave little in its original home. That this may have been the case is further suggested by the numerous finds of moulds for silverware which have been made in Egypt.³ For the present, therefore, we can consider Alexandria as at least one possible home for Hellenistic silverwork, though future excavations may show that another or several other places in Asia Minor or elsewhere will prove to have a better claim.

Besides the Boscoreale cups there are other monuments with which the crane representations on the Morgan cups must be connected. A silver cup formerly in the Fejervary Collection⁴ shows

¹ Cf., e.g., Th. Schreiber, *Die alexandrinische Toreutik*, and the other references given in the footnotes of that article.

² Cf., e.g., E. Pernice, *Hellenistische Silbergefäße*, 58tes Winckelmannsprogramm, 1898.

³ Cf. Th. Schreiber, *Die alexandrinische Toreutik*, pp. 227 ff.; C. C. Edgar, *Catalogues of the Cairo Museum, Greek Moulds*.

⁴ *Monumenti, Annali e Bullettini dell' Istituto*, 1854, p. 90, pl. 20.

similar designs, but in a more crowded composition of less good execution. It is possible that we have here a Roman reproduction of a late Greek composition such as that shown in our cups. On the Arretine clay vases of the first century B.C., where we see so many motives of Greek toreutics utilized by Roman potters, there are apparently no scenes analogous to our crane representations; but a general comparison between the two from the points of view of form, design, and execution is very instructive, since it shows the strong influence exercised by Greek goldsmiths, not only on later metal-workers but also on followers of other crafts. It is important also to compare our cranes with earlier Greek productions, to which they in their turn doubtless owe a considerable debt. The wonderfully lifelike cranes, herons, storks, and geese on fifth-century gems, some signed by the great gem-cutter Dexamenos, show with what finished mastery such birds were represented during the best period of Greek art.¹ The fourth-century silver vases, with wild geese and other animals, found in the Crimea, prove that the metal-workers of that period were representing scenes taken from animal and bird life with extraordinary skill.² The artists of the Boscoreale and Morgan representations did not, however, reproduce only what had been done before. By placing their birds in their natural setting and showing us the plants and insect life with which they were surrounded, they have given their scenes an idyllic quality new in the history of Greek art. They are as representative of their age as Theokritos is in the field of literature; and the spirit in their scenes is as different from the fifth-century pictures as the poems of Theokritos are from the dramas of Sophokles.

¹ Cf., e.g., Furtwängler, *Antike Gemmen*, pl. XIV, 2, 4.

² Cf., e.g., S. Reinach, *Antiquités du Bosphore cimmérien*, pl. XXXV; and L. Stephani, *Compte-Rendu de la commission impériale archéologique*, 1864, pls. I-III.

A PORTABLE IVORY SHRINE · BY ALICE M. FREEMAN

THIS shrine (Figs. 1 and 2) was bought at a curio shop in Parten-Kirchen, Bavaria, in July, 1906, and had been obtained two months before in Wemding, Suabia. Its workmanship is in the French-Flemish style of the fourteenth century; and it is believed that the exterior decoration was an addition to a shrine of earlier date. The shrine is twenty-three centimeters in height, and bears a lady's coat-of-arms surmounted by a ducal crown. The only colors on the statuette are the blue lining of the Virgin's mantle, her red shoe, and the Child's red drapery. The hair of both figures is gilded, as are the Virgin's crown and the designs on her robe. The background of the carvings is dark blue diapered in gold, and the wing figures are draped in rich red, violet and green. There is no trace of renovation of these colors, but when the shrine was purchased it was evident that the gold on the carvings had been very recently re-gilded. This fresh gilding soon tarnished. All the gold on the ivory is underlaid with vermilion. On the outside the shrine is dark blue, strongly tinged with grayish-green.

The coat-of-arms has the device replaced by an invocation to the Virgin: *S(ancta) Maria o(ra) p(ro) n(obis)*. The suppression of the armorial motto in favor of a religious petition was very usual during the Middle Ages; instances are found on tombs and on small objects used as aids to devotion; on the latter the invocation usually served to dedicate the article to the Virgin, but when placed on a shrine it became a supplication to the enclosed statuette. The heraldic scroll and the interior of the golden crown are uncolored, but the ivory is "shaded to the tints of age."

There is no record of the shrine among either genuine or forged ivories. It is believed to have been a bridal gift to the lady whose marriage (Fig. 3), attended by the couple's guardian angels, is depicted on the shutters. These brilliantly colored miniatures show the free execution of all illuminated work previous to the fifteenth century; and the ideal type of the angels' faces, and their stiff, sumptuous vestments show them to be closely allied to ecclesiastical figures of the early Cologne school. The irregular features of the red-haired bridegroom have the sharp individuality that marks a study from life; and it is quite apparent that the bride was older and also much taller than the bridegroom, although the artist, by an

ingenious pose of the youth's right leg, very nearly succeeded in creating an illusion of equal height in the figures.

The first clue to the shrine's origin was furnished by the coat-of-arms. The *Livre d'or de la Noblesse de France*¹ states that the *armes d'or a la fasce de gueules* were borne by the lords and barons of *Condé en Hainaut*, and the early annals of the province of Hainaut prove that there is lineal descent from Jacques d'Avesnes, the founder of this house, to Princess Marguerite of Hainaut, who was married, in 1385, to Prince John of Burgundy. As, according to heraldry at this date, a daughter bore her father's arms only and on a shield separate from those of her husband, the display of the Condé-Hainaut coat-of-arms on the ivory shrine would seem to be indubitable proof that it once belonged to Marguerite of Hainaut, Duchess of Burgundy, the renowned patron of art and letters.

The greatest social event of the late fourteenth century was the double wedding between the houses of Burgundy and Bavaria. The marriage of Princess Marguerite of Burgundy to Count William of Hainaut, heir to the throne of Bavaria, was arranged for State reasons and was readily agreed to by all excepting the Duchess of Bavaria, who made her consent to her son's marriage conditional on the wedding of her nineteen-year-old daughter, Princess Marguerite of Hainaut, to Prince John of Burgundy, the fourteen-year-old heir of Philippe le Hardi. Froissart² asserts that the Duke of Burgundy objected to this second marriage in his family, "as he had planned to marry Jean sans Peur to Catherine of France, sister of his nephew, King Charles the Sixth," but it was finally arranged that both weddings should take place at Cambrai on the twelfth of April. When King Charles "heard of all this he announced his intention of attending the marriages of his cousins," and Froissart declares that "there had not been a feast for these last two hundred years that had such preparations made for it." De Barante tells us that for his children's weddings the Duke of Burgundy "clad fifty knights of his suite in green velvet, two hundred and fifty lesser knights in satin of the same color, and his court livery was green and red." It is interesting to note that the costumes of the shrine portraits show only green and red with cloth of gold, a material restricted at this period to the use of royal and ecclesiastical personages. The cos-

¹ *Livre d'or de la Noblesse de France*, publié sous la direction de M. Le Mis De Magny, Paris.

² Froissart. *Chronicles of England, France and Spain*. Chap. cliii, p. 341.



FIG. 1. FRANCO-FLEMISH PORTABLE IVORY SHRINE. FOURTEENTH CENTURY.
Property of the author, Miss Alice M. Freeman.

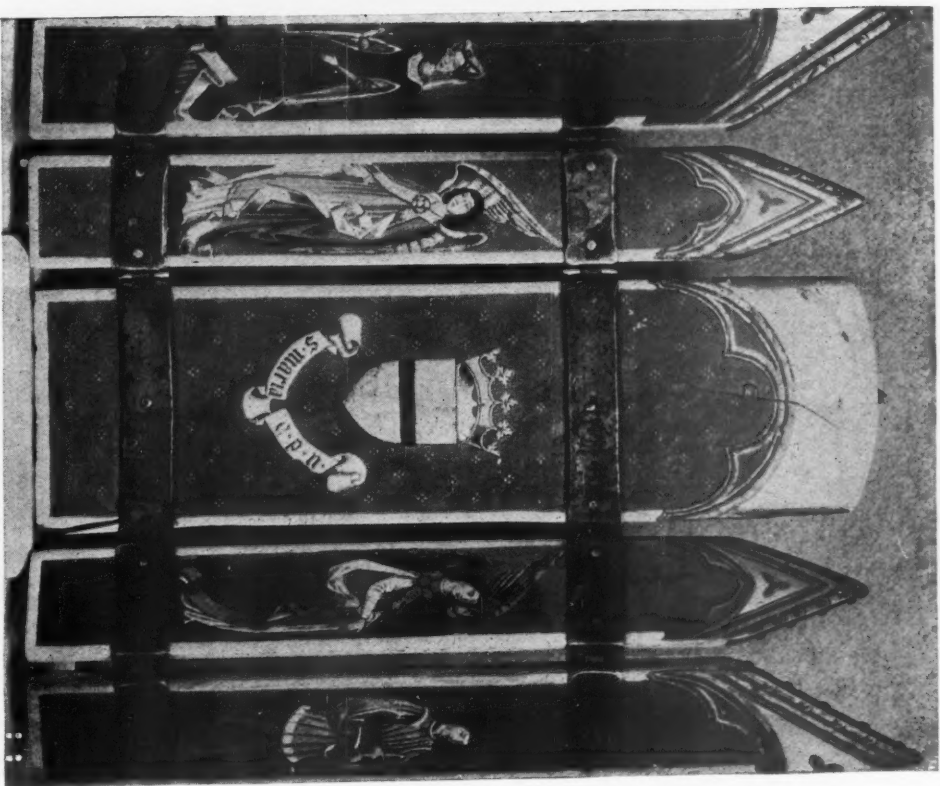


FIG. 2. REVERSE OF IVORY SHRINE (FIG. 1).

1000
1000
1000
1000



Fig. 5.
Jean sans Peur.



Fig. 6. Bridgroom.



Shrine Angel.



Virgin by
Hubert Van Eyck.



Fig. 4. Side View
of Shrine
(Figs. 1 and 2)

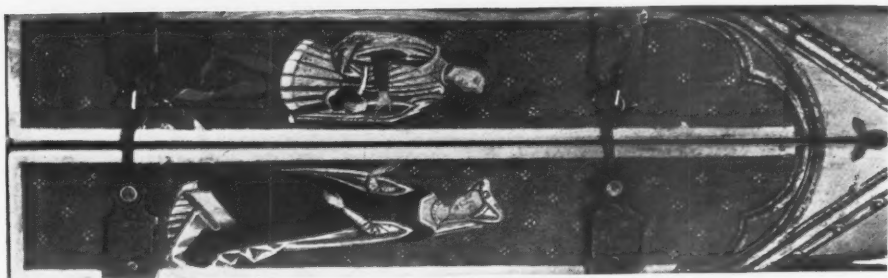
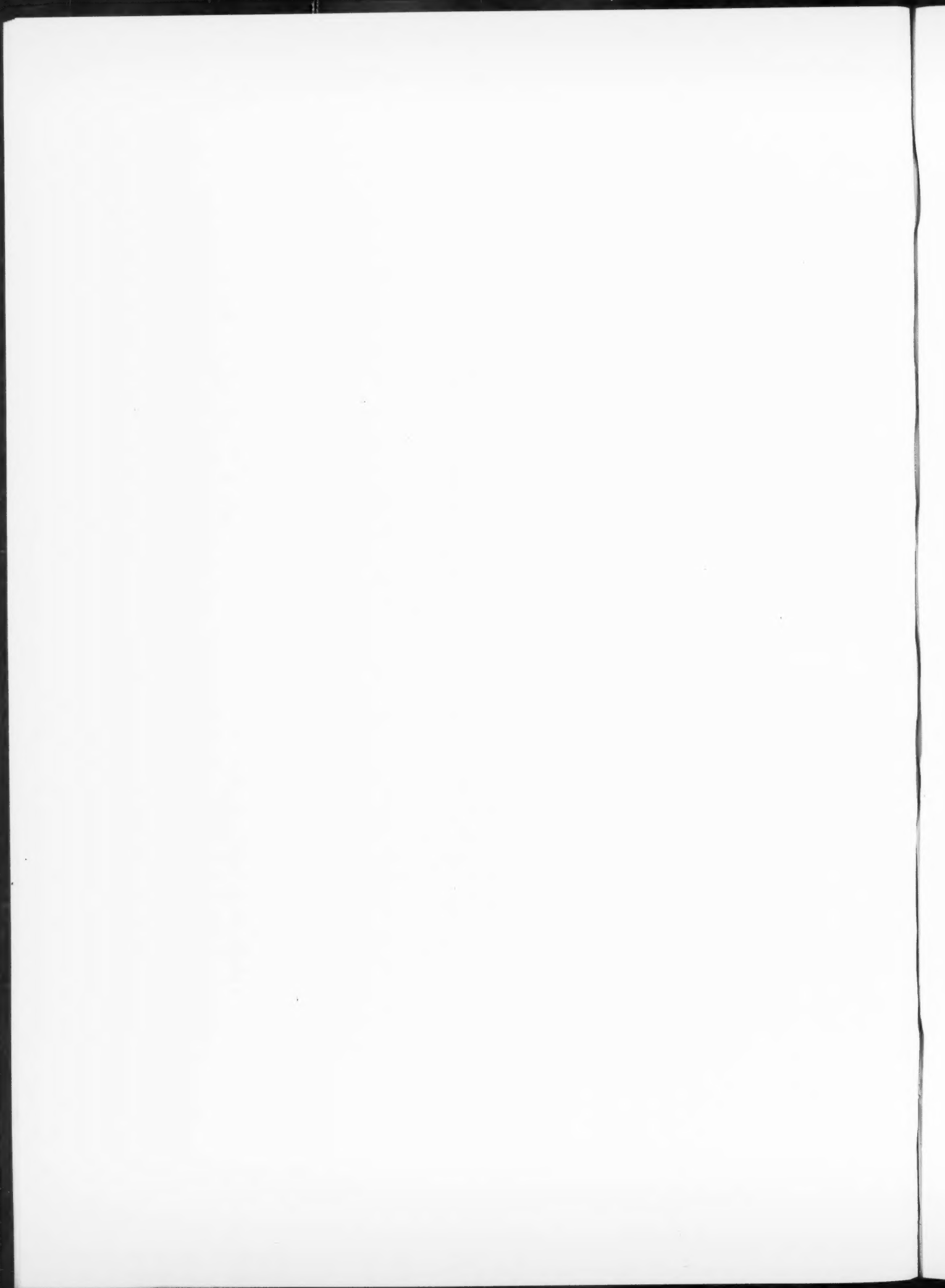


Fig. 3. Portraits on Shrine
(Figs. 1 and 2).



Fig. 7. IVORY SHRINE. FOURTEENTH CENTURY.
The Louvre, Paris.



tumes are French and the bridegroom's tunic corresponds perfectly with Viollet-le-Duc's¹ description of one worn by a courtier about 1390. This, he says, was "a *corset* fitting closely on the chest and back, with regular pleats and reaching only to the knees with the waist elongated by the belt which was worn low and very tight." The shrine bridegroom's tunic is of pleated cloth of gold worn over a doublet of bright green; his bride's mitre head-dress is gilded, and her ermine-bordered scarlet gown displays undersleeves and petticoat of cloth of gold.

A comparison of the miniature of the ivory bridegroom (Fig. 6) with a portrait of Jean sans Peur in middle age (Fig. 5) shows such a remarkable facial likeness that it would seem there could be little question of its authenticity. Lecoy de la Marche² says, with regard to certain miniature portraits of Charles V in presentation volumes: "One has here portraits that are contemporary and authentic, their family likeness permits of no deception. The Valois type was not beautiful and is perfectly recognizable, added to the fact that the physiognomy of Charles V was also true to the traditional type." We have been unable to obtain any portraits of Marguerite of Burgundy and have only her tomb statue by which to verify the ivory bride; nevertheless, in spite of much difference in age, both effigy and miniature show the same tiny, pouting mouth and singularly flat profile.

It seems incredible that a piece, presumably of such great historic value, could have remained concealed for centuries, but it is a significant fact that it first appeared when, after the passing of the Church and State separation law in France, the treasures of certain northern churches were being secretly emptied of their relics. The mystery seems explicable only on the supposition that during the eclipse of Gothic art the ivory had been stowed away in some old church or monastery treasury and perhaps forgotten.

Portable ivory shrines are now among the rarest of art treasures, only thirty-six entire specimens being known. While many were no doubt destroyed by sixteenth century iconoclasts, their disappearance "is chiefly due to a law of the Catholic Church which requires the destruction of consecrated objects no longer needed in order to prevent their possible desecration."

Until the thirteenth century portable ivory shrines were used

¹ Viollet-le-Duc. *Dictionnaire de Mobilier Français*. Vol. III, p. 267.

² Lecoy de la Marche. *Les Manuscrits et les Miniatures*. Chap. V, p. 189.

during services at the side altars of French churches. After they were superseded by the great permanent altarpieces they continued to be made for journeys and for private oratories. Labarte calls the shrines of the fourteenth century the flower of French ivory carving, and says that they were often mounted on reliquaries of gold. The thin base of the Hainaut altarpiece differs in tint and polish from the rest of the ivory and is evidently a modern addition. The cut iron mountings are somewhat rusted and the bands show remains of a polished surface. Molinier asserts that the mountings of ivory shrines were usually of silver; the appearance of the commoner metal on this piece would, therefore, seem to indicate a strong preference for its use, a choice due, no doubt, to the fact that "iron when applied to mediæval works of art was always symbolical of strength and power."

Restoration of the miniatures is found precisely where constant grasping of the closed altarpiece would naturally have worn away the paint. The bridegroom's tunic and the angels' pink and red copes have been renovated in pale brown; and the features of the bride's angel (Fig. 4) would seem to have been entirely restored, as they are drawn on the bare ivory. It is obvious that when the shrine was held in the left hand—leaving the right free to open it—a finger must usually have rested on the head of this angel. Although the right eye of the bridegroom's angel is certainly a restoration, the face is delicately shaded, and the heads of both portraits are in a perfect state of preservation.

A polyptych in the Louvre (Fig. 7) shows precisely the same architecture and pictorial composition as the Hainaut shrine, but it is more than two inches taller, the physiognomy of the wing figures is of a different type, and its Virgin lacks the classic pose and slightly hieratic expression of the earlier type Virgin of the ducal altarpiece. Koechlin¹ calls this Virgin a little affected, but classes the shrine with two others, in the British and Berlin museums, as the best of the fourteenth century series. He says that the statuettes prove the ivory carvers to have imitated the marble statuary, but "it is probable that not a single marble Virgin can be found that possesses grace and elegance equalling those of our little statuettes." He adds that if the Child in these altars "seems moderately attractive only, the Virgins, on the contrary, are truly exquisite. . . . they have

¹ Koechlin. *Quelques ateliers d'ivoiriers français aux XIII et XIV siècles*. (Gazette des Beaux-Arts, III-XXXIV, 1905.)

the accentuated chin and almond eyes." The wing scenes, he tells us, were borrowed from the miniaturists, and were carved by apprentices while the masters carved the figures of the Virgins, and "a charming statuette will often be found in the midst of wings altogether commonplace."

The type of the carvings on the Hainaut shrine is that of ivories produced before the middle of the fourteenth century, and its selection for decoration was doubtless due as much to the superior beauty of its earlier workmanship as to hurried preparations for the Burgundian wedding.

In view of resemblances between the miniature work on the ivory shrine that commemorates the marriage of Marguerite of Hainaut and certain figures on the Ghent altarpiece, which is believed to have been begun by Hubert Van Eyck many years later for Marguerite's brother, Duke William of Bavaria, one is strongly tempted to assume that Hubert must have been among the many famous artists in the service of the Duke of Burgundy at the time of the double wedding.

In 1385 Hubert Van Eyck would have been about twenty years of age. The analogies between the great altarpiece and the tiny one are found in the devout type of the angels' faces, in the shape and pose of the hands, and in the style of the gold-bordered copes with their large circular clasps and sharply broken folds. The early Cologne figure of the shrine bride, too, is repeated in the martyr Virgins of the Ghent altarpiece. It will be remembered that it was the resemblance of these virgins to the adoring virgins of the Turin Hours that identified Hubert as the author of certain miniatures in the latter. On the altarpiece and in the Hours are virgins who, like the shrine bride, "lift the skirt with the left hand," a mannerism declared by Weale to be "peculiar to John Van Eyck." In the arrangement also of the Burgundian wedding ceremony on green grass one is reminded of Hubert's fancy for placing his sacred scenes on flowery turf. In 1385 Hubert Van Eyck was too young to have had imitators, but the influence on his work of Jean de Bruges has been noted through his taking from Jean's Angers tapestry the design and character of the figures for his Ghent altarpiece. The great Flemish-French master would appear to have influenced the painter of the ivory shrine in his choice of its coloring, which seems to accord with the description of the miniature of Charles V,

painted "in rich colors against a dark blue background" in combination with monochrome "tinted to the shades of old ivory."

It is interesting to find that the features of the better-preserved of the shrine angels are almost identical with those of a little Virgin in the Vienna Museum painted by Hubert Van Eyck "not later than 1410." The Virgin also of a small triptych, found in a church in Dijon and painted by Hubert Van Eyck, shows the same unusual features as the Vienna Virgin and the shrine angel. The appearance of the features of these two little Virgins on the Hainaut shrine—painted a quarter century earlier—encourages the bold conjecture that a very early work of Hubert's has come to light.

Modern art historians "accept as proof of Hubert Van Eyck's authorship of unsigned works the repetition of faces always noble and ideal in type, with the same style of garments painted very freely with overlaid tints and visible brushstrokes." The garments of the shrine miniatures are painted very thickly "with overlaid tints and visible brushstrokes," while the hands and features are left in a sketch-like state. Again, in the ivory portraits "the two arches of the upper eyelids are parallel," a peculiarity claimed by Durand-Greville for "Hubert's type of eyes" as differing from the eyes of Jan Van Eyck's portraits.

Weale asserts that portraits in three-quarter profile did not appear until the second half of the fourteenth century. Portraits, he says, were always in profile until toward the end of the century, when some show the body in three-quarter with the head in profile; and he cites a portrait of Jean sans Peur, in the Antwerp Museum, which depicts both body and head in three-quarter profile but with the tip of the nose cutting the line of the cheek. He states that the Van Eycks were the first to produce portraits correctly drawn in three-quarter profile, and says that they "often added hands to these portraits." To what other pupil of the Cologne school than Hubert, then, would one look, at this early date, for the pre-eminence in portraiture displayed by the painter of the shrine bridegroom?

A GOTHIC HUNTING TAPESTRY IN THE COLLECTION OF MRS. PHOEBE A. HEARST · BY PHYLLIS ACKERMAN

ONE of the most charming and essentially Gothic types of early tapestries is the *mille fleurs aux personnages*. The usual form is a field of delicate wild flowers on a dark blue background interspersed with birds and animals, with a small group of people in the center. Not infrequently the personage is a hunter on horseback attacking his prey.

In this Gothic hunting tapestry from Mrs. Phoebe Apperson Hearst's collection the old motive of the hunter in verdure has received a new and quite unusual interpretation. As in the more familiar pieces, a hunter on horseback in the center of the design spears a fabulous wild creature, in this case a huge bright blue bird. As in the more usual pieces, also, the background is dark blue. The difference is in the character of the verdure.

Instead of myriad delicate blooms, this hunter rides through a forest of huge upspringing trees, with thick heavy foliage and large fantastic blossoms. It is not, like the *mille fleurs*, merely a flat decorative field. It is an actual jungle that grows up thick around him, the flowers entangling his horse's flanks. It is a new tapestry botany, richer, coarser, more elaborate than the typical shrinking flowers. One old familiar tree there is, that has done duty in many Late Gothic verdures, but the other plants are a novelty. They almost seem Renaissance in their large boldness, especially a thistly shrub that rather suggests the acanthus. But the rendering is pure Gothic, flat and unmodeled.

The hunter is very crude and primitive, drawn with small regard for anatomy in the rather heavy brown outlines of the earlier pieces. With the fine Gothic instinct for flat decoration he is turned around, regardless of realism, to the three-quarter view, the bas-relief posture that gives the broadest surface and yet the most vivacious outline.

The birds and animals, also, are pure Gothic, delightfully naïve, especially the frisking goat in the foreground. The water convention in the ponds, alternate shaded blue and white stripes, is very primitive, as is the rather clumsily rendered running vine border. The weave, also, is primitive, coarse, twelve warps to the inch, not always very skilful, and with a wool warp.

What is this variation from type? Clearly it is Gothic; Gothic in spirit, the ingenuous romanticism that really is a child-like wonder at facts; Gothic in drawing, flat outline renderings; and Gothic in color, rich dark tones on a limited scale with very simple hatchings. Yet it is not a Gothic verdure.

It has been suggested that it is a German piece, the crudity the result of their lesser skill in weaving; the carrying on of the early Gothic elements with the somewhat Renaissance field the result of the lateness of their real Renaissance. The water convention, too, is one that appears in some German-Swiss tapestries. If it is German, it is certainly sixteenth century.

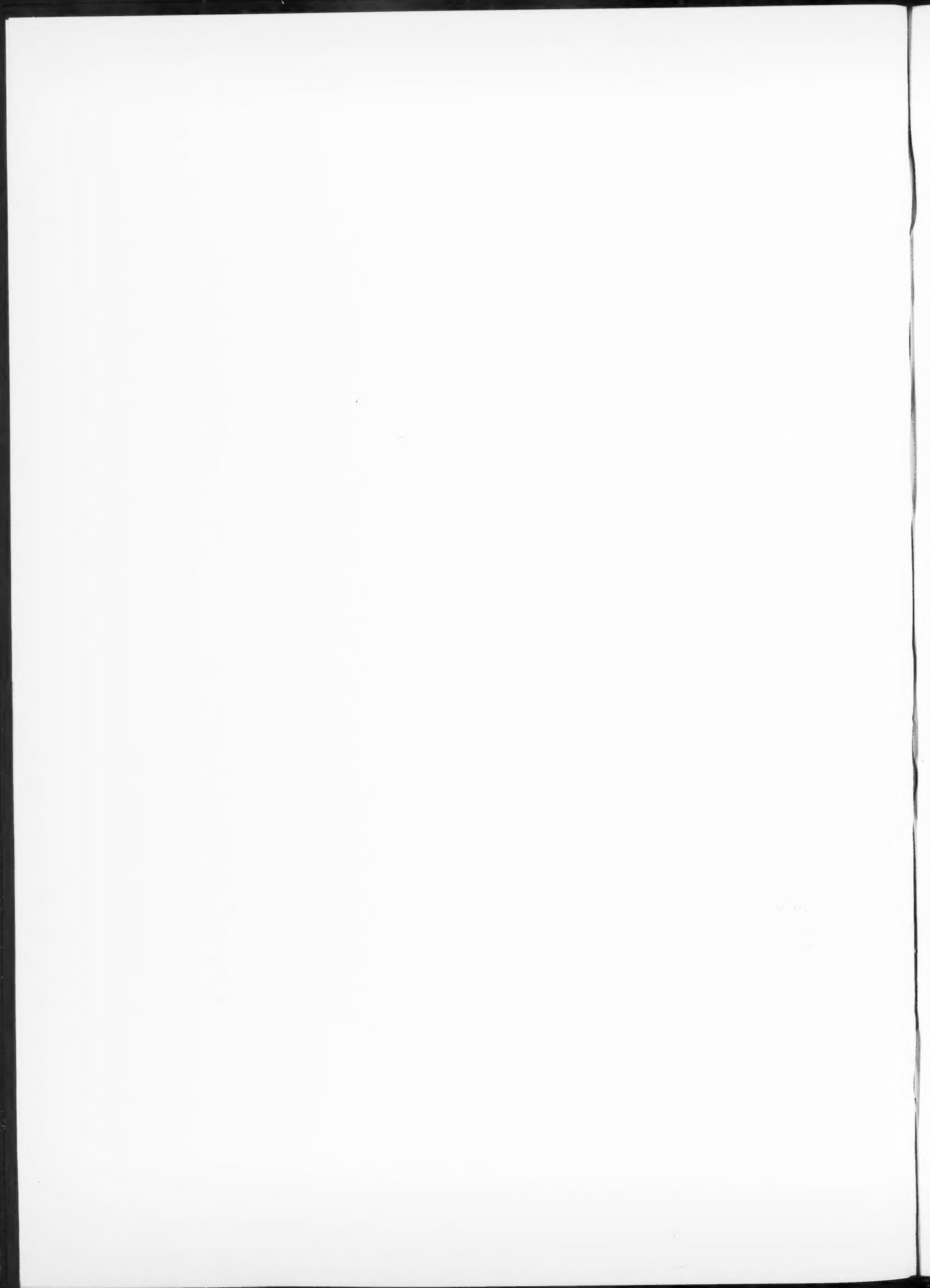
But if it is a German piece, it is as much a variation from type as it would be if classified as a Flemish or French piece. And the verdure is really not any truer to Renaissance character than to Gothic. It must be frankly accepted, then, as an exceptional piece, almost certainly of the late fifteenth century, probably Flemish or French.

This judgment is substantiated by the one set similar to it with which I am familiar. In Rothamstead Manor, Hertfordshire, there is a set of the Sibyls, with a very similar verdure. Here, too, coarse-leaved trees spring from bottom to top of the tapestry in an even bolder and more amazing botany that is, however, very close to that of Mrs. Hearst's piece. The birds in the Rothamstead set are almost identical and the animals very similar in spirit. These pieces, moreover, are finally identified as Flemish or French by the unmistakable character of the figures and the French inscriptions. Their borders are more elaborate than in Mrs. Hearst's and the figure drawing more sophisticated. All involve, also, a very beautiful and elaborate Gothic fountain. They may be a later product of the same looms.

Playful yet dignified, intimate yet with the aloofness of real aristocracy, Mrs. Hearst's tapestry is the embodiment of the direct charm and the inexhaustible delight in decoration of the Gothic.



GOthic HUNTING TAPESTRY. FRANCO-FLEMISH.
Collection of Mrs. Phoebe A. Hearst, San Francisco, California.



THE GORDON FAMILY: PAINTED BY HENRY BEN-
BRIDGE • BY CHARLES HENRY HART

IT was of much significance, showing the wide interest that is felt at the present time in American art, its history and development, as also the rapid progress it is making abroad as well as at home, when some months ago on coming to this country Mr. William Roberts, of London, apprised me with much enthusiasm of the rich find he had made of an unknown portrait of Pascal Paoli, painted by an almost unknown American painter, "Henry Bembridge," in whom and in his work he had become so much interested that he had written an article on the picture and its painter for ART IN AMERICA, which is the important contribution in the April issue. He was still more astounded when I told him that this was an old story to me, that the painter's name was "Benbridge" not "Bembridge," and that I had rich material concerning his life and work, all of which I offered to Mr. Roberts that he might complete his study; but he preferred that I should do it as a follow-on to his article. To properly understand this painter's place in American art it is necessary to give a little more of his family history and social environment than is customary in these articles.

Henry Benbridge was born in Philadelphia, May 20, 1744. He was an only child, and, his father dying when he was seven years old, his mother soon after married, on October 15, 1751, Thomas Gordon, a widower of wealth and prominence in the community, of Scotch descent. Benbridge early showed a distinct inclination for the fine arts, and when quite a youth painted the panels of his stepfather's drawing-room with designs executed with so much skill as to attract attention and be remembered. About the same time, or perhaps a little earlier, when Benbridge was fourteen, John Wollaston, an English portrait painter, whose picture of "George Whitefield Preaching" is in the National Portrait Gallery, London, visited the Colonies, painting, chiefly in Virginia and in New York, the portraits that for many years have gone by the name of the "Almond eyed" portraits. It was only very recently discovered that he was their limner, and that he painted in Philadelphia, as we learn from the "Verses inscribed to Mr. Wollaston," by Francis Hopkinson, printed in the *American Magazine* for October, 1758. Among his sitters was Thomas Gordon, at the age of forty-six, and it is not

at all unlikely that the stepfather sat for his portrait that his "son-in-law," as stepsons were called at that period, might see practically how a painter did his work, and a portrait that we have by Benbridge of his little half-sister, Rebecca Gordon, aged eight, seems to hark back to Wollaston; yet it is a better picture than Wollaston's canvas of the Custis children and some others of his little folk of the same period.¹

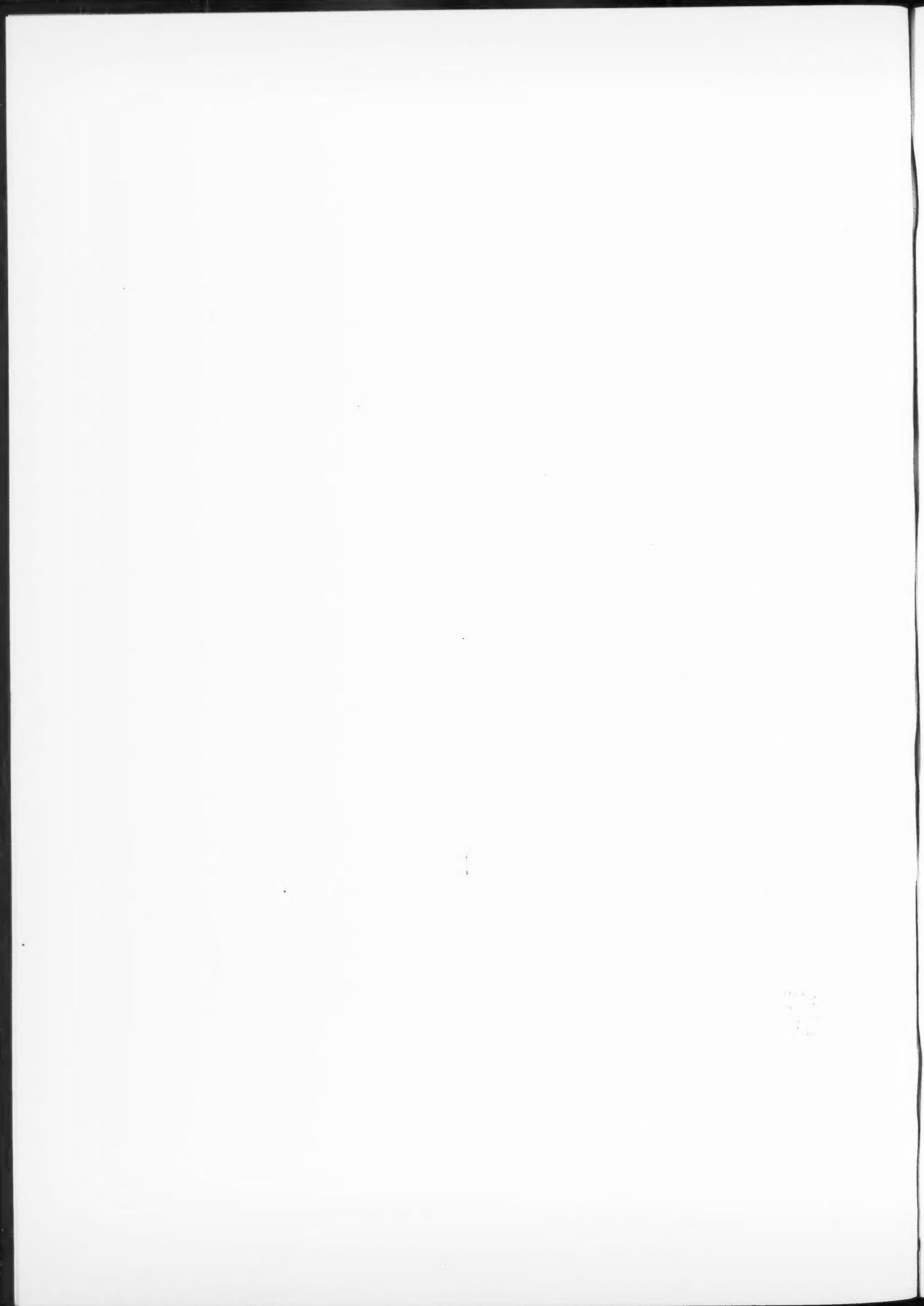
When Benbridge had passed his majority, his indulgent parent sent him to Italy to study art, where we are told he studied with Battoni and with Mengs; but there is not the least influence of the last-named mediocre German painter to be found in Benbridge's work, so that he probably was only in the Art Academy that was under Mengs's direction. But the direct influence of Battoni can be seen in Benbridge's brownness and sameness of coloring, as also in the care he gave to the painting of hands, often in difficult positions, and in the drawing of laces and of draperies, as also the lack of solidity that is so marked in Battoni's paintings. Several copies of old masters that Benbridge made in Italy are preserved, and the influence of the Italian school is shown in all of his subsequent painting.

Mr. Roberts has given the details of Benbridge's painting, at the early age of twenty-four, the large life-size whole-length portrait of Paoli, and toward the close of 1769 he left Italy for London. Previous to his arrival there his stepfather wrote to Doctor Franklin from Philadelphia, February 5, 1769, begging him to recommend his "son-in-law, Henry Benbridge, to such of his acquaintances as may employ him," adding, "He has been several years in Italy studying painting, and is now going to London for business." December 7, 1769, Benbridge wrote to Mr. Gordon from London: "I embrace the first opportunity to let you know of my safe arrival here after a pleasant voyage from Leghorn of twenty-eight days. Upon my arrival I waited upon Mr. West, who received me with a sort of brotherly affection, as also did my cousin, Mrs. West. . . . I believe I shall stay in London and intend to paint Mr. Coombs and Mr. Franklin to put in the exhibition next spring, which pictures I shall make a present of to them and you will see them upon those two gentlemen's return to Philadelphia and by that means be able to form a judgment whether I have improved

¹ The important picture of Rebecca and Elizabeth Gordon by Benbridge is also reproduced as further illustrating the very considerable capacity of the artist as a portrait painter.



HENRY BENBRIDGE: THE GORDON FAMILY.
Property of Mrs. John B. Brooke, Reading, Pa.



or not and I hope they will turn out to your satisfaction." The answer to this letter has a canny "P. S. If Mr. Franklin seems disposed to be your friend, pray give my compliment to him and make my best acknowledgments for any favors you receive from him." Before receiving this letter, indeed before it was written, Benbridge wrote to his father, January 23, 1770: "I waited upon Doctor Franklin with your letter of recommendation and he said any service he could be to me, he would do with the greatest pleasure. I am now preparing for the exhibition; Mr. Coombs (who is very much esteemed in this Capitol and known almost by all) I have made choice of for the subject of one of my Pictures and I believe I shall do Mr. Franklin for the other, for these two gentlemen are so exceedingly well known the making of strong likenesses will be a great means of recommending me to business and will do more than the recommendation of any private gentleman whatever; and another thing is that after an Exhibition, my friends have it more in their power to say anything in favor of my Performances, when they have seen what I am able to do in the Portrait way . . . Mr. West intends to decline Portrait Painting and to follow that of History, which will enable him to recommend me much stronger, than if he was in the same way with myself. My own picture he approves of and thinks it very like, as likewise that of Mr. Coombs; you'll see them both, God willing, in America and then you will be able to judge of the advancement I have made in Art. If I stay here I shall get money fast, or if I should come to America I am not afraid but I shall do well there too." He wrote to his mother the same day: "I am not long painting a Picture, having studied an expeditious way and at the same time a correct one." Unfortunately we are left in the dark as to this "method."

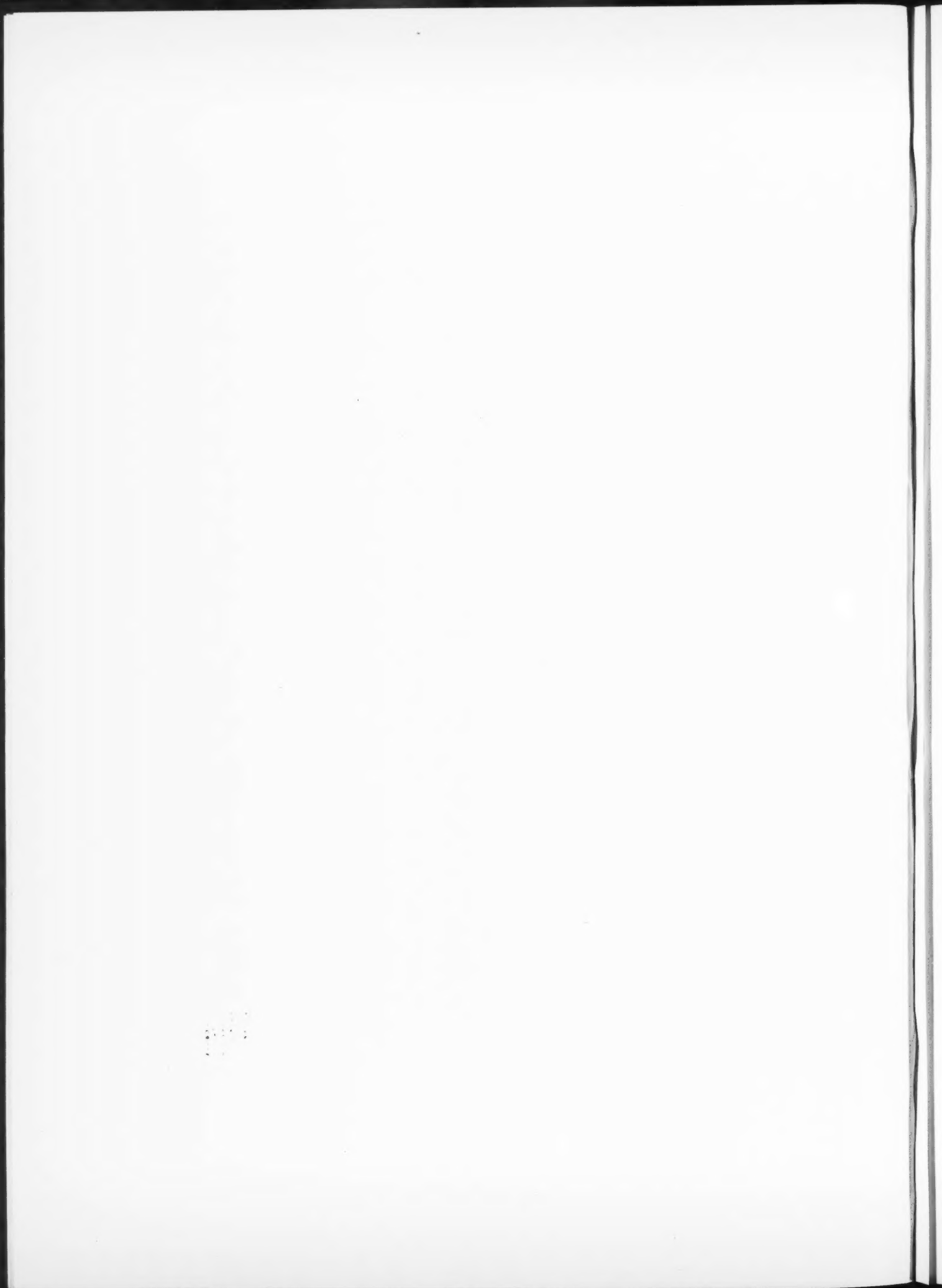
To the second annual exhibition of the Royal Academy, Benbridge sent his portraits of Dr. Franklin and of the Rev. Thomas Coombs, who went from Philadelphia to London to take orders and was appointed chaplain to the Marquis of Rockingham. He returned to Philadelphia, where he became Assistant Minister to Christ Church and St. Peter's, but being a Tory was proscribed and returned to England, where he died. Unfortunately, no trace of either of these portraits remains to-day. For some reason of which we are not advised except as Franklin says "affection," Benbridge did not tarry long in London, as on July 19, 1770, Franklin writes

to his wife: "This will be delivered to you by our ingenious countryman Mr. Benbridge, who has so greatly improved himself in Italy as a Portrait painter that the Connoisseurs in that Art here think few or none excel him. I hope he will meet with due encouragement in his own country and that we shall not lose him as we have lost Mr. West. For if Mr. Benbridge did not from affection chuse to return and settle in Pennsylvania, he certainly might live extremely well in England by his profession." The following day Benjamin West wrote to Francis Hopkinson: "By Mr. Benbridge you will receive these few lines. You will find him an Ingenous artist and an agreeable Companion. His merit in the art must procure him great in couragement and much asteem. I deare say it will give you great pleasure to have as an ingenous artist residing amongst you." It was probably the end of September, or early in October, before Benbridge reached home after an absence of nearly five years, and what was doubtless his first work after his return, as also his most important, was the remarkable family piece that is our illustration. This is the most ambitious canvas undertaken by a native artist in Pennsylvania up to the time of its execution. In New England we had earlier similar large compositions by Smibert, Feke, Greenwood and Blackburn, but none that we know in the middle Colonies. The subjects in the picture are the painter's mother in the center with his stepfather to left and Mr. Gordon's daughter Dorothy by a former marriage, who was the wife of Lawrence Saltar, standing to the back, the child on Mrs. Gordon's lap being the first Saltar baby. The handsome boy with a bird on his finger, to extreme right, is George, the youngest child and only son of Mr. and Mrs. Gordon, aged about eight years, while the little girl at Mr. Gordon's knee must be the youngest daughter Frances, who became the wife of Doctor Enoch Edwards, whose portrait by West is a masterpiece in portraiture, although she does not appear as old as ten years, which would have been her age at that time, or the senior of her brother George.

A mere glimpse of this canvas, 74 by 66 inches, invokes the involuntary feeling that it is unmistakably Italian in its feeling, treatment and execution, with the infant as pronounced a *bambino* and as uncomfortable looking as any limned by the great Italian masters. The reproduction conveys this same impression as the painting does. As already said, Benbridge was impregnated with



HENRY BENBRIDGE: REBECCA AND ELIZABETH GORDON (MRS. JOHN SALTAR).



the brownish sameness of Battoni's palette and his shadows were too opaque, and although later he became somewhat emancipated from these errors, all of his work belongs to the Italian school.

Shortly after his return he was honored by election, January 18, 1771, to membership in the American Philosophical Society, the bantling of Franklin, and doubtless on the doctor's suggestion. But the climate of his native place did not agree with Benbridge, who was a sufferer from asthma, and he sought a more congenial climate by removing to Charleston, S. C., a little more than a year before the death of Jeremiah Theus, who was the painter *par excellence* in the South from 1739 to 1774 and whose best work is of a very high order of artistic excellence, so that Benbridge was on the ground to take Theus's place, which he filled so well that many of Benbridge's portraits of women painted in Charleston are claimed for the brush of Copley, as are some of Theus's portraits of men. A notable one of this class is the portrait of Elizabeth Bee Holmes that was catalogued and hung at the Brooklyn Museum Portrait show in the winter of 1917 as by Copley, notwithstanding its owner had loaned it and entered it as by Benbridge. Another very important painting by Benbridge of four life-size figures in a landscape, Mrs. Thomas Hartley, her daughter, Mrs. William Somersall, granddaughter Mary, afterward Mrs. John Ward, and a little girl of the Deas family, on canvas 76 by 50 inches, was in the Hudson-Fulton Exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art in 1907, likewise given to Copley. A letter of marked importance in connection with this picture has recently been found from Benbridge to his sister, written from Charleston, April 28, 1787, in which he says: "I flatter myself I should have the happiness of seeing you all this summer, but am afraid I shall be disappointed. *I have begun a large picture, four whole lengths the size of life* and with some other work will take up part of the summer to finish." Here he gives the date of the picture, which, without rhyme or reason, pictorially or historically, has been ascribed to Copley in 1760. This painting, too, is purely Italian in its treatment, especially the elaborate folds of the drapery and the figure of little Miss Deas. It is much more brilliant in color than Benbridge's earlier work and a very beautiful painting of the first quality, well worthy of the brush of Copley, even though it has no resemblance to his work. Similar erroneous attributions have crossed the water, where portraits of Lord William

Campbell, the last Royal Governor of South Carolina, and of his wife, who was a sister of Ralph Izard, unmistakably from the hand of Benbridge, are tagged "by Copley."

Benbridge painted quite a number of group portraits, or conversation pieces as they were called, some life size and some quite small, among the latter being a beautiful composition of his sister Elizabeth with her husband, John Saltar, and four children, out in the open, while another is of the distinguished Commodore Truxtun with his family, a daughter of whom married Benbridge's only son, named for his father, through which line the painter has many descendants. Benbridge continued painting in South Carolina until nearly the close of the eighteenth century, when he removed to Norfolk, Va., and there gave to Thomas Sully his first instruction in oil painting. Mr. Benbridge painted in miniature as well as in oil, and his ivories are of a very superior quality, one of himself being finely executed both technically and in color and showing him to have been a large, handsome man. Unfortunately, his work is little known, and as we have seen he is often robbed of the honor that is his due. A number of his portraits are in possession of members of the Gordon family, including our illustration, reproduced by the courtesy of its owner, Mrs. John B. Brooke of Reading, Pa., and in South Carolina they are of course frequently met with, sometimes with the painter known, but oftener unknown. The Allston family has a beautiful portrait of Washington Allston's mother by Benbridge, and in the South Carolina Art Association there hangs a portrait of an old lady, "Mrs. Simons, née Dupre," with this curious entry in the catalogue: "Benrige an English artist. Picture 225 years old before 1912."

Benbridge made frequent visits to his old home city, but his health rapidly declined and he died in February, 1812, at the age of sixty-eight. Dunlap, who seems never happy unless speaking disparagingly of his superiors, social and artistic, visits his spleen on Benbridge by saying "he died in obscurity and poverty," a statement happily untrue. Now that Benbridge has been presented to his fellow countrymen and the art world, it is to be hoped that his art will be sought for and appreciated as it should.

THE EARLY OIL PAINTINGS OF WINSLOW HOMER
BY FREDERIC FAIRCHILD SHERMAN

THOMAS BAILEY ALDRICH in 1866 wrote of Winslow Homer's early studio in the old University building in New York, that "it is remarkable for nothing but its contracted dimensions; it seems altogether too small for a man to have a large idea in." As a matter of fact, most of Homer's ideas then, as later, came to him elsewhere; in soldier camps, at Houghton farm, in the North Woods, Bermuda or Maine. Eventually, however, the cramped life of the city, encompassed by walled streets and harassed by the unnatural noises of endless traffic, drove him to the distant coast of Maine, where he found a congenial home and his greatest inspiration in a supreme interpretation of the grandeur of the sea.

His reputation as a marine painter has been sufficiently established by the able exposition of other critics and needs no further emphasis, but I feel that there is something more of merit to be found in his early oil paintings than others have recognized. Admitting their technical deficiencies, which indeed he really never overcame, the charm of his farmyard and school-house pictures and the realism of his Civil War subjects are sufficiently compelling to permit one the belief that they have been somewhat neglected or certainly overlooked for the more pretentious marines which he produced in later years. It would be surprising indeed if an artist who was capable as a boy of eleven of producing such a masterly little drawing as that of the boys playing Beetle and Wedge should not achieve something of distinction in his early oil paintings of ten or fifteen years later. That none of Homer's canvases of this period are numbered among those which justify the pre-eminence of his position as an American painter is due more, perhaps, to the insistent dramatic quality of his later product than to any degree of artistic superiority in it sufficient to account for the prevailing neglect of the very notable compositions of his youth.

If he eventually concluded that the native farm-hand was an inartistic subject, it was not before he had painted one or two pictures of him that are fine enough in themselves to hold their own in every sense save that of mere size, with some of the more pretentious of his later works. I myself find the figures in his early

paintings not merely more convincing in construction but more satisfying in their individuality. They may not be so heroic in form, but neither are they so wooden in structure as those that follow in his great marines. They have generally more reality in their obvious relation to their surroundings than the figures he uses to illustrate his stories of the sea. Probably the very fact that at first he aimed at nothing more than a truthful rendering of what he found interesting in life, instead of endeavoring to produce instantaneous records of its dramatic moments, is sufficient to account for the sense of reality I find in these earlier and miss in his later productions. Circumstance effectually precluded the possibility of his ever posing his models so as actually to paint from observation such pictures as *The Life Line* and *The Undertow*, and he had no sufficient knowledge of the figure to enable him to visualize, so as to paint from mental projections, the actual appearance of such scenes. Homer himself said that when he had selected a subject he painted it exactly as it appeared, and the sense in which this may have been true is indicated very clearly, I think, by the measure in which he failed in some of his later works to picture the figure with any sort of convincing approximation to that realism in which it generally appears in his earlier canvases.

Certainly the fact that a picture tells a story in no way prevents its being perhaps a great work of art, and in an exact ratio to the importance of the story a picture tells it may or may not be a masterpiece as an artist succeeds or fails in his presentation of whatever the subject may be. The common criticism of Homer is that he is an illustrator, not an artist; it is based upon an incomplete knowledge of his work and practically ignores the best of it—those great marines that tell no stories and that have no meanings other than those that are inseparably associated with our thought of the sea, its power and its immensity. As a matter of fact, he was an illustrator and a very able one, and furthermore he was a great artist; he became a great artist whenever he gave up painting stories of the sea to paint the sea itself, as will be evident enough, I believe, to any one who contemplates such canvases as *the Northeaster*, and *the Early Morning after a Storm at Sea*.

It is worth while to remark that, precisely because Homer painted a subject exactly as it appeared, his pictures of the sea are the greatest of our time, for they are above all else masterpieces of

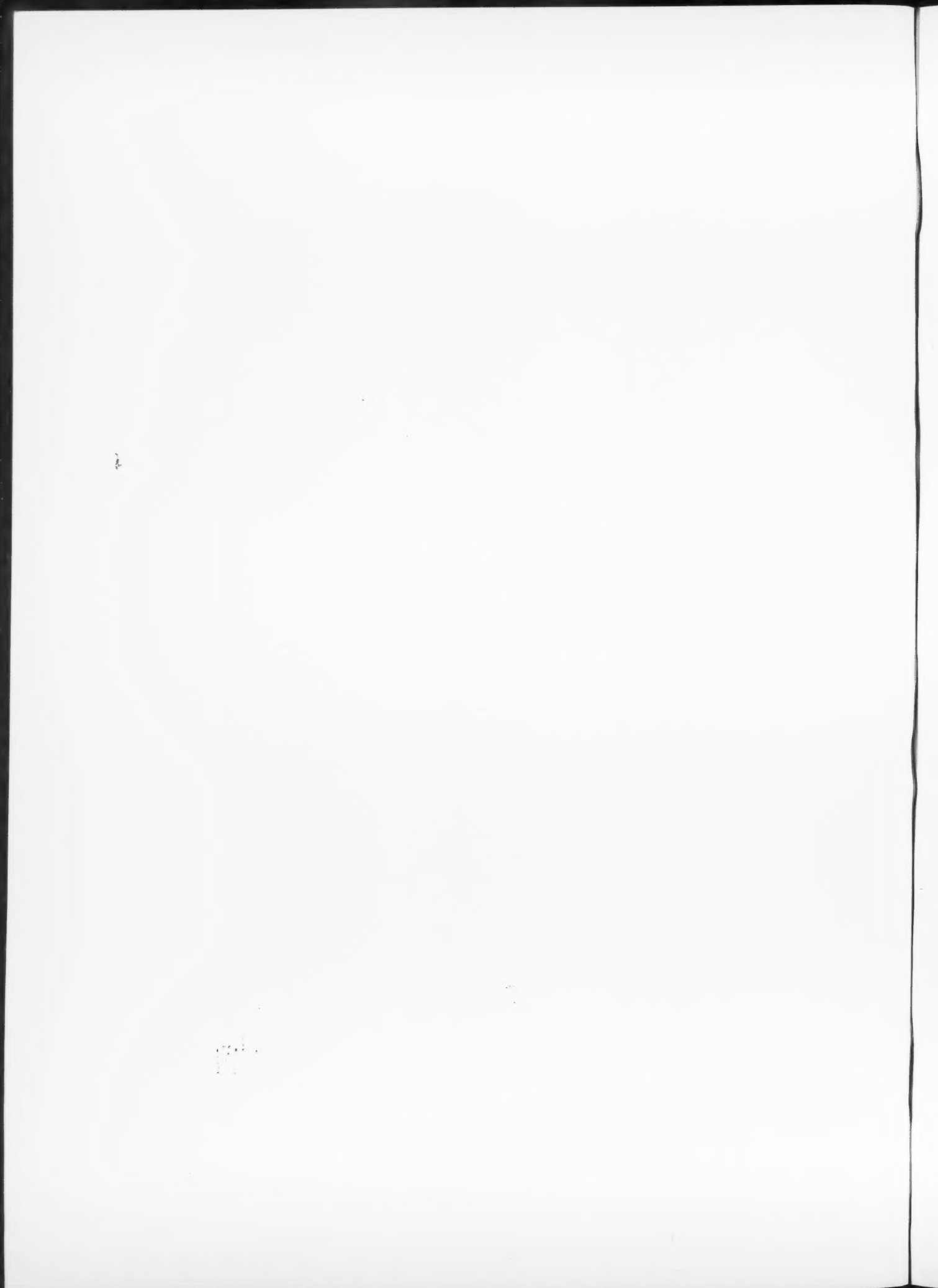


WINSLOW HOMER: A FRENCH FARM.
Property of Mr. E. C. Babcock, New York.



WINSLOW HOMER: PROUT'S NECK.
Property of Mr. John W. McCanna, Boston.

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WINSLOW HOMER: HAYMAKING.
Collection of Frederic Fairchild Sherman, New York.



WINSLOW HOMER: THE SONG OF THE LARK.
The Hillier Art Gallery, Smith College, Northampton, Mass.

realism. His early pictures also are eminently realistic and exact in their interpretation of everyday life, and very often as void of any literary meaning as the finest of his later works. They have always a human interest, however, associated with our knowledge of life, which suffices to arrest and hold the attention, and oftener than not they are really inviting in their coloring. *The Haymaking*, 1864, and *Song of the Lark*, 1876 (an idea which he used again, many years afterward, in the large canvas at Milwaukee), are excellent examples of the finer sort of realism one finds in his farmyard pictures. Here all is simplicity and the figure has all the accustomed value of its actual importance in the scene—no more, no less. *The Musical Amateurs*, formerly in the collection of Mr. John H. Converse and now owned by Mr. De Vine, possesses somewhat of the Whistlerian quality that Kenyon Cox has remarked in another early Homer, *The New England Country School*. Indeed, a sketch for the figure of the 'Cellist which I recently chanced upon reminded one very forcibly of another sketch of a 'Cellist, from the brush of Whistler himself, formerly in the late William M. Chase's collection and now in that of Mr. Frank Vanderlip. *The Musical Amateurs* is dated '67 and is not uninteresting in color. The sincerity of the study of the two musicians is sufficient to convey a definite idea of their personalities to anyone interested enough in such a subject to examine the canvas with the attention it deserves. And such an examination will discover in it also a fine tonality and a charming breadth of handling that was not at all common to the genre painting of the day in this country.

In these pictures of Homer's the pose, whatever it is, is natural, not theatrical in the sense that many of the figures in later canvases are obviously arranged in difficult tableaux to illustrate unusual stories. In doing just that sort of thing he oftener than not sacrificed too much of the realism, the truth, of life, to be very convincing, and to some of us, at least, a few of his greatest canvases can therefore never be anything other than noble failures.

In a picture like *The Bright Side*, 1865, or *The Visit of the Mistress*, 1876, at the National Gallery, Washington, there is no attempt to tell any story. But the happy abandon of the negro teamsters in the former is as infectious as the quiet contentment of the latter is satisfying to the observer. The individualities of the people pictured are preserved in such a way as to convey to one

an exact sense of their feelings, and it is because of this that the pictures appeal to us. They are notable examples of his ability to reproduce the sentiment as well as the appearance of a scene, and in their realism they compare with the best of his work in which the figure appears at all.

Of landscape Winslow Homer painted very little. The two examples that I reproduce, one comparatively early and the other quite late, are therefore of all the more interest, simply as illustrating a very uncommon and little known departure from his customary and familiar habit. The earlier picture is a result of his trip to France, and though appreciably tighter in treatment than the Prout's Neck sketch, it has all of the out-of-door feeling that so sensibly constitutes the persuasive charm of the later canvas. It is also entirely as enjoyable in color, and from it one gets definitely the feeling of locality which is a quality that differentiates honest from inferior landscape painting. The Prout's Neck is a study so marked with the conscious realization of actual appearances and an adequate rendering of their artistic interest as to persuade one that Homer might well have evolved from such an auspicious experiment a landscape as vital as the most impressive of his marines. It is instinct with the evidence of an intimate understanding of significant form, finished with a rare economy of effort in the matter of mere painting, and not only satisfies the most exacting expectations of the realist, but measurably fulfils the higher aim of pictorial art in its suggestive indication of abstract beauty.

CORRESPONDENCE

RICHARD WILSON'S VIEW ON THE THAMES

My dear Mr. Sherman:

I should like to correct a little slip in my account of Richard Wilson's View on the Thames with Westminster Bridge in Mr. J. H. McFadden's collection (p. 117). I state that the cupola in the distance is "probably that of Bedlam Asylum on the Surrey side of the river." On recently investigating the matter I find, however, that the dome of St. Paul's Cathedral was the only one of its kind in London at the time Wilson painted this picture, and that Bedlam was not erected on its present site until many years afterwards. The bend in the river from Blackfriars Bridge to Westminster Bridge is liable to deceive one as to objects seen at a distance from either bridge.

W. ROBERTS.

